

Article 13 Petition – Gas Tax

Whereas, road and sidewalk reconstruction and repair provides decent jobs at above living wage standards; and,

Whereas, decent roads and sidewalks are necessary for the safe operation of motor vehicles including public transportation and school buses, and for safe walking and bicycling, and

Whereas, it is estimated that it will take \$15 to \$19 billion over the next twenty years simply to maintain Massachusetts' transportation infrastructure in its present deplorable condition; and,

Whereas, many of Amherst's primary roads and sidewalks, and most of its secondary and tertiary roads are in deteriorated and unsafe condition; and,

Whereas, an annual increase of 1/2¢/gallon in the Massachusetts gasoline tax from 1991 forward would have provided sufficient funding to prevent the deterioration of Massachusetts' transportation infrastructure and its funding mechanisms; and,

Whereas, Massachusetts' gasoline tax of 23.5¢/gallon was last increased by x¢ in 1991, when the average price of regular unleaded gasoline was \$1.14/gallon (\$1.45 in C\$) and oil was \$24/barrel (\$30.5 in C\$); and that tax has, as a consequence, lost 1/3 of its purchasing power since the commodities and services it purchases have also escalated in price; and,

Whereas, the Massachusetts House of Representatives and State Senate voted in the State Budget both adopted on Friday, June 19, 2009 to designate for transportation purposes \$275 million of the \$759 million estimated to be raised by a 1.25¢ increase in the sales tax – that \$275 million being an amount equivalent to a 10¢ increase in the state's gasoline tax;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Amherst's Representative Town Meeting requests that its state legislators and the leaders of the Massachusetts General Court support, at or near the levels proposed by the Patrick Administration, an increase in the Commonwealth's gasoline tax with the following reservations and conditions:

that in the year when such a gasoline tax increase takes effect, that forward-funding for all regional transit authorities (RTAs) sufficient to preserve services at the FY 2009 level being and continue on as long as that gasoline tax increase continues to be collected; and

that 15% of all gas tax receipts be allocated to Chapter 90 aid to cities and towns; and,

that Chapter 81, which provided that 7.5% of all gas tax revenues be allocated to cities and towns via the Cherry Sheet for policing and maintaining local roads, be reinstated; and,

that at least 80% of all gas tax receipts be allocated to the regions from which they are collected, which allocation shall include Chapters 81 and 90 and RTA allocations, rail infrastructure and service improvements, bikeway funding, etc; and,

that gasoline used for municipal and school vehicles and for tax-supported public transportation vehicles be exempted entirely from the Massachusetts gasoline tax; and,

Further be it resolved that a copy of this resolution as finally voted by the Amherst Representative Town Meeting be sent by the Town Clerk to Governor Deval Patrick, to State Senate President Therese Murray, to Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo, to State Senator Stanley Rosenberg, and to State Representative Ellen Story.